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Churches of Christ Salute You with a Herald of Truth: May Report and June Sermons

Herald of Truth

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Churches of Christ
Salute You
with a



**MAY REPORT and JUNE SERMONS
1954**

Herald of Truth

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Financial Statement

MAY REPORT AND SERMONS FOR JUNE

By changing the format of the monthly sermons and report a considerable savings has been achieved. The radio log will no longer be carried as it has become so long that it is no longer practical to do so. Requests for station logs will be filled directly from the mailing room with individual mimeographed sheets. Since the T.V. Log is small as yet it will be carried instead of the radio.

Beginning with this issue and from now on the monthly report will be carried in the following month booklet of sermons. By doing this it will not be necessary after this month to wait so long until all information is in and printed before delivery.

Every possible effort is being made to cut cost of this work and still carry on at top efficiency.

The cost of both radio and television time is great but this is especially true of television. One of the greatest costs is the production of a new series of films every thirteen weeks. At present these are costing three thousand dollars each. We state these facts that you may fully understand when we say that unless more funds are forthcoming before very long that it will be necessary to drop some of the radio stations or perhaps all the television outlets. It will take as near as we can estimate about one hundred thousand dollars more money to fully insure the completion of the entire program for the rest of this year.

TV STATIONS

CARRYING THE HERALD OF TRUTH

WBUF Buffalo, N.Y.	2:30 p.m.
WTVP Decatur, Ill.	2:30 p.m.
KCBT Harlingen, Texas	3:30 p.m.
WJTV Jackson, Miss.	1:00 p.m.
KFEL Denver, Colo.	12:30 p.m.
KWFT Wichita Falls, Texas	1:30 p.m.
WCOV Montgomery, Ala.	1:30 p.m.
KTBC Austin, Texas	1:30 p.m.
KCFB Tulsa, Okla.	1:30 p.m.
KDUB Lubbock, Texas	1:30 p.m.
KARK Little Rock, Ark.	1:30 p.m.
WSIX Nashville, Tenn.	1:30 p.m.
WJHP Jacksonville, Fla.	1:30 p.m.
KTXL San Angelo, Texas	4:30 p.m.
WTSK Knoxville, Tenn.	3:00 p.m.
KGNC Amarillo, Texas	1:00 p.m.
WITV Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.	3:30 p.m.
WATR Waterbury, Conn.	3:00 p.m.
WJHL Johnson City, Tenn.	1:30 p.m.
KIDO Boise City, Idaho	3:30 p.m.
KCRI Cedar Rapids, Iowa	1:30 p.m.
KPHO Phoenix, Ariz.	1:30 p.m.
KRLD Dallas, Texas	9:00 a.m.

"MAKING CHRIST YOUR PERSONAL SAVIOUR"

RADIO AND TELEVISION SERMON

James W. Nichols

No. 123

June 6, 1954

How many of you in the audience today have ever stopped to think what it would mean to be lost? In this land of ours in which we are blessed with so many of the comforts of life and so enthralled with modern conveniences, some of us fail to ever stop and consider this question of being lost.

It is folly to try to push it from our mind, for whether we want to face it or not, it is before us. Whether we want to believe it or not, "it is appointed unto man once to die and after that the judgment." The Lord tells us that at the judgment the righteous and the unrighteous shall be separated eternally. The Lord said, "But when the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the angels with him, then shall he sit on the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all the nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as the shepherd separateth the sheep from the goats; and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels. And these shall go away into eternal punishment: but the righteous into eternal life." Matthew 25:31-34, 41, 46.

After the judgment there will be no turning back. If we are among those who are on the left hand of the Lord our part shall be in everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels, the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone where the worm never dieth, but we shall be tormented day and night forever and ever.

As we stand on times side of eternity and view the possibility of being lost it should make us shudder, for I am convinced that there is not a person in this audience today who does not wish to tread the streets of gold and drink of the water of life, walking and talking with the saints of all ages.

But blindly wishing will accomplish nothing. We might as well face the facts and see reality as it actually is. We all sin and fall short of the glory of God. Paul said in the third chapter of Romans, "as it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one; for all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God." It simply means that there are none of us who can stand justified by our own merits before God. John said, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the

truth is not in us. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us." I John 1:8 and 10.

Now then, this becomes a real problem. There are none of us who want to be lost, yet all of us sin and Peter says, "And if the righteous is scarcely save, where shall the ungodly and sinner appear?" I Peter 4:18. There then arises the cry of anguish and despair. There is no hope. We are all doomed.

But in the very darkest moments of hopelessness there arises that star of hope, Jesus the Saviour of the world. All is not lost, but there is a way of redemption and a way of escape. Christ, the only begotten son of God, became man, born of woman, that He might save man from sin. The angel in prophecy of the Lord said, "Ye shall call his name Jesus, for He shall save his people from their sins." He said Himself, "I came to seek and to save that which is lost". Jesus gives hope to every man in that He can save him regardless of color, customs, language or nationality, from his sins.

Not only is Jesus the Christ, the Saviour of the world, but He is the only Saviour. Peter declared, "And in none other is there salvation: for neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved." Acts 4:12.

Christ is the only Saviour of the world, but he is not Saviour to every man. Does it seem a paradox that Christ is the Saviour of the world but not the Saviour of every man? The answer is a simple one. Recently there have been developed certain serums and drugs that seem to be the hope for many dreaded diseases. These medical discoveries have been called the Saviour of man from disease, but these drugs do not save every man, only those to whom they are administered.

So it is with Christ, He is the hope, the Saviour of the world, but he is the hope to only him who has Christ as his personal saviour. While salvation through Christ has been made available for all men, regardless of nationality, this matter of salvation is a personal and individual problem. In II Cor. 5:10 Paul sets this forth clearly, "For we must all be made manifest before the judgment-seat of Christ; that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he hath done, whether it be good or bad."

Now since Christ is the Saviour and the only one through whom we can be saved, the natural question that follows is how may I make Him my personal Saviour.

There is a great deal of confusion in the land as to how one makes Christ his personal Saviour, but the Lord's word explains it so simply. We find in Hebrews 5:8,9, explained this way, "though he was a Son, yet learned obedience by the things

which he suffered; and having been made perfect, he became unto all them that obey him the author of eternal salvation." There is nothing difficult about this. Christ is the Saviour of them who obey him. Obedience then is the condition for man making Christ his personal Saviour.

Someone says, I cannot believe this, for Paul says in Romans the 10th chapter, "For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be put to shame. For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek: for the same Lord is Lord of all, and is rich unto all that call upon him: for, Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed?"

See how Paul says that all we have to do is believe. But that is not what Paul says. Paul says that we call upon the Lord after we have believed upon him, and whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. Since the writer of Hebrews says that Christ is the author of eternal salvation to all who believe on Him, it is only logical to conclude that we call upon the Lord through obedience. The Lord explains it in this manner in the sermon on the mount: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven." (Matthew 7:21). There can be no mistake about what the Lord meant. It is not enough just to say that you believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God, or to fall down on your knees to pray to the Lord, but Christ said, "He that doeth the will of my Father who is in Heaven."

To many, Romans 10 and Matthew 7 appear to contradict one another, but this does not follow. Paul did not say that whosoever called the Lord's name should be saved, but he that calls on the name of the Lord. The Lord says that not everyone that calls me Lord, Lord, but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many have been confused and misled to believe that all they had to do was believe and call the Lord by His name, but the Lord said he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven. Luke records the Lord saying it in this manner. "Why call ye me Lord, Lord and do not my will?" in other words, how dare you call me your Lord or Master if you are not willing to serve me. I am not your Saviour unless you are willing to obey my will. The Lord does not teach that all it is necessary for us to do is kneel by the radio and pray or to merely accept Jesus in our hearts, but that we must do His will.

My friends have led you to believe that you can be saved without obeying the Gospel of Christ. I plead with all of my being today, wake up to your true situation, for it is later than you think. Paul says that Christ is going to come with "His power of angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God and obey not the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ." II Thess. 1:7-8. Christ is the only way, the only hope,

and therefore, if you have him not as your personal saviour you stand without hope, condemned before God.

In the light of this situation, it is well for us today to stop right where we are and examine ourselves. Is Christ your personal Saviour? He is not your personal Saviour if you do not believe with all of your heart that God is and that Jesus is His Son. Christ said, "He that believeth not is condemned already." I am persuaded that the vast majority of you believe that God is and that Christ is His Son, but is it a different story with you when it comes to the question of your repentance? Obedience is the condition of our salvation and Paul says, "The times of ignorance therefore God overlooked; but now he commandeth men that they should all everywhere repent." Acts 17:30. If you have not turned your back on sin in repentance, no matter how much you believe, Christ is not your personal Saviour nor will he be your personal Saviour unless you are willing to stand and confess His blessed name before man. He emphatically stated, "Everyone therefore who shall confess me before men, him will I also confess before my Father who is in heaven." Matt. 10:32. If you have not had the courage and humility to own Him before others, you have not obeyed Him and He, therefore, is not your Saviour.

It was the same Christ who said, "Except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish," who said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Have you been buried with your Lord in Baptism? I cannot understand how men can deny the fact that the Lord has commanded us to be baptized and since obedience is the condition of having Christ as our personal Savior refuse to be buried with the Lord in baptism.

You remember Saul of Tarsus asked the Lord Jesus what he would have him to do and the Lord told him to go into Damascus and wait there and it would be told him what to do. Three days after, praying and fasting, there came to Paul, Ananias, sent by the Lord who said, "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on his name." Acts 22:16. Here was a man who wanted to know what to do to be saved. The Lord speaking directly to him told him that one would be sent unto him who would tell him what to do. The command given was to be baptized and wash away thy sins, calling on his name. Ananias in clear-cut language told Saul that he would call on His name by being baptized.

In all humility and kindness, but in frankness I tell you that if you have not done these simple things you have not Christ as your personal Saviour. But there awaits for you only a certain fearful expectation of judgment to come. Men may have deceived you and led you to believe that you could be saved by some other means, but Christ says to you as he said 1900 years ago, "Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not my will?" Awake to reality and face the truth. Christ is the author of eternal salvation, unto them that obey Him.

You, there by the roadside, those of you in your homes, those of you traveling down the highway, or those of you in some hotel, will you not open your eyes and see that without Christ there is no hope, and without obedience you have not the Christ, and if you should be lost, to what avail would be all the things that you have or that you own or that you believe. Christ said, "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul." What if you should lose your soul just because you have been willing to believe what someone else has told you.

The day of judgment will be a fearful day if you have not Christ as your personal Saviour. John paints with words the fear of them who stand before God lost when he said, "And the kings of the earth, and the princes, and the chief captains, and the rich, and the strong, and every bondman and freeman, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains; and they say to the mountains and to the rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: for the great day of their wrath is come; and who is able to stand?" Revelation 6:15-17. I am pleading with all of my being today, in view of the coming judgment, in view of the love that God bestowed upon us by salvation through His Son, will you not, wherever you are, resolve that this day you will obey the Lord, making Him your personal Saviour.

"THE PRODIGAL SON"

RADIO AND TELEVISION SERMON

James W. Nichols

No. 124

June 13, 1954

Listed among the great literary pieces of the world is the Lord's story of the Prodigal Son. It is so rated because of its simplicity and pathos. Of course, such respect is given by writers not because of its truth nor its author. With these two aspects considered, it is head and shoulders above the writings of man.

Parents are faced with real problems with their children. There are problems of discipline, the problems of education, the problems of personality, and so many others. Children are human, and each one has his own individual personality, making it necessary for them to be treated differently and trained individually.

Legion are the broken hearts of parents because of sons or daughters who by their waywardness have so disappointed their parents.

The father of the story found in Luke the 15th chapter was faced with such a problem. Hear the Lord as He tells this moving and dramatic story.

"A certain man had two sons: and the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of thy substance that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living. And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together and took his journey into a far country; and there he wasted his substance with riotous living. And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that country and he began to be in want. And he went and joined himself to one of the citizens of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him. But when he came to himself he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish here with hunger: I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight: I am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants. And he arose, and came to his father. But while he was yet afar off, his father saw him, and was moved with compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight: I am no more worthy to be called thy son. But the father said to his servants, Bring forth quickly the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: and bring the fatted calf, and kill it, and let us eat, and make merry: for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was

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lost and is found." Though this story is some 1900 years old it is still as real as man.

The expression of the younger son, "Father, give me the portion of thy substance that falleth to me" in a spiritual sense represents the attitude "Lord, give me a chance to run this business of life by myself. I believe I can do a pretty good job with it. Just give me the things that I want and I will do the rest." It almost sounds as if this son is saying to his father, "When you die I am to receive a certain portion of what you leave, but I think I can do a better job with it than you are doing. Let me have my share now. I don't want to rely on you any longer."

There are some of you in the audience today who are twins to this younger son. You feel like you can get by without God. The way that you are handling your life is pretty efficient. O, you are willing to recognize that God has done some things for you, but by and large, you are self-made. What you have, what you accomplish, what you are, you think you have done by yourself. Let me tell you, there is going to be a rude awakening for you. What you have isn't your own. It just has been loaned to you. Even your soul belongs to God. "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it." Ecc. 12:7.

When you stand before God in judgment He is not going to be satisfied with an answer like this: "God, I think I have done pretty well by myself." Even the very best of us are sinners and we fall short of the glory of God." The man who lives and dies without God 50, 60, 70, 80 or 90 years will live without God for eternity.

Whether you want to believe it or not, the man who takes such an attitude is destined as sure as night follows day to follow the same path as the prodigal son. O, you may be a successful man financially or socially, but you are a failure spiritually.

After this son had taken his share, it wasn't many days later when he gathered all together and took his journey into a far country. This gathering meant everything. The earthly possessions, even his soul. He had made up his mind that he could do better by himself, and as long as he had this attitude he couldn't be very comfortable at home. So he cut himself off completely: going to a far country.

That is the way we are when we decide that we are going to do something of which those close to us disapprove. We want to get as far away as possible. Some even think subconsciously that they can go so far away that God does not see them. But as the news of the wastefulness and sin of this young man came back to this father, so our unrighteousness is forever before God. I do not care how far you go, you

cannot escape the all-seeing eye of God. David said, "Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me." And God records that which we do and in the day of accounting we will be faced with the record. Paul said "each man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it is revealed in fire; and the fire itself shall prove each man's work of what sort it is." I Corinthians 3:13, "For he that doeth wrong shall receive again for the wrong that he hath done: and there is no respect of persons." Colossians 3:25. Just remember you may forget about God in a far-away country, but God does not forget about you.

When this young man left home, having forgotten about guidance, he immediately wasted what he had in unrighteousness. It is quite probable that what he had, bought quite a number of fair-weather friends. This young man's attitude was "I will get all out of life I can" but then there comes the dramatic statement. "When he had spent all there arose a mighty famine in that country and he began to be in want."

He had reached the end of the row. He had enjoyed the pleasures of sin, but he didn't begin to reap the consequences of sin until after he had enjoyed them. That is the way it is. Sin holds some pleasure for the moment. Satan would be a fool to think that he could persuade men to do something that they did not find pleasure in, but pleasure soon turns bitter. Punishment, either mental, physical or spiritual always follows sin as waste always follows waste. Waste your life, waste your substance, waste your time, your talents, and one day you will wake up to reality and will be willing to give anything in the world if you could just have that which you wasted back again.

But still this young man wasn't willing to recognize his real situation. Though he was beginning to taste the fruits of sin, he felt he could still make a come back. So he joined himself to a citizen of that country. There is a great lesson found in this fact. This young man first went into this country to satisfy his yearning for pleasure. He used the country, he used its citizens to minister to his desires, but he ends by becoming the slave. That is the way with sin. We begin by using sin and end by sin using us. James says, "but each man is tempted, when he is drawn away by his own lust, and enticed. Then the lust, when it hath conceived, beareth sin: and the sin, when it is fullgrown, bringeth forth death." James 1:14,15.

Do you know what the citizen had this young man to do? He sent him into the fields to feed swine. To the Jew there was nothing that could be more degrading than the caring

for swine. According to the law of Moses they were unclean animals, not to be eaten or raised.

Thus the young man who thought that he could plunge deeper and bring himself out begins to taste the bitter dregs of the wages of sin. Can you not picture this young man who was once high and mighty, and thought himself quite capable now tending the swine in the fields?

Yet this is not the end of his steps downward to ruin. The Lord said, "That he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat and no man gave unto him." The original language indicates that he did eat these husks which were actually the pods or the fruit of the Corab tree, and that is all that he had to eat. Can you see him now, the son of a nobleman, living and eating with the swine? And the most amazing thing about it all is that it was not until he had become a pauper that he came unto himself.

Those words, "came unto himself" carry with them great significance. He had never seen himself before. He hadn't been willing to admit what type of person he was. It indicates that he more or less looked inward and recognized his condition. And when he did this he began to reason logically. "How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish here with hunger. I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight: I am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants." The young man is finally humble. He is willing to do whatever his father commands that he do as a servant. Up until this time it would have done him no good to go back to his father because he was in no condition to be reconciled. Suppose he had gone back before he had taken his last fling by attaching himself to the citizen of that faraway country. Suppose he had gone back with the idea "Well, I could do it by myself, but it is just a little bit easier this way." He wouldn't have been actually convinced that he had been wrong.

My friends, there are some in the audience here who are trying to come to God who are not ready, because they haven't completely humbled themselves to the point that they are willing to become as a servant.

There are some of you who reason within yourselves, "True, I need God, and I will go to him in my own way under my own conditions." If you are going to come to the Lord it must be in complete submission and humility, saying, "Father, make me as one of thy servants." Christ said, "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever would save his life shall lose it: and whosoever shall lose his life for my sake shall find it." Matt. 16:24,25.

Unless you are willing to follow the Lord in obedience

to his commands you might as well forget about it all. Until you are willing to hear the commands of the Lord, to repent and confess and to be baptized and do just as He has commanded, you are in no condition to approach the throne of God.

Let us now then look at the father. The Lord said that while the young man was afar off the father saw him and was moved with compassion and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him. There couldn't be a more beautiful portrayal of God's love and concern for His creatures. He is looking, He is searching, hoping for you today. His arms are outstretched ready to receive you. No matter who you are, where you are, or what you are, He is still ready to take you into His arms and to care for you. No matter to what depths you may have drifted, He still patiently waits and watches, hoping and beseeching. Paul said, "But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved)."

And the beauty of it all is the fact that as this young man came willing to be a servant his father rewarded him as a son. When you are willing to humble yourself to the point of being a servant God will lift you up at the last day as a son, a brother to Jesus, His only begotten Son. But the decision is yours, as to whether you are willing to humble yourself and come in simple obedience as a servant. Will you not do that today my friends? He is ready to receive you if you are ready to come.

Some time ago I heard this story which I feel illustrates God's care for you. A minister was taking a trip by railroad and soon noticed that the young man across the aisle was quite disturbed for some reason. He moved over to talk to him and the young man unfolded this story. He had run away from home while quite young and had soon fallen into the wrong crowd. They got into trouble and he was sent to the penitentiary. He just now received his parole and decided that he wanted to go back home, but he didn't know whether or not his parents would want him now. So he wrote them a letter telling them that he would be on a certain train that passed by their farm. If they were willing for him to come home they should tie a white rag on the old apple tree that was in the corner of their orchard by the railroad tracks and he would know to get off at the station down the road. Otherwise, he would just go on and all would be forgotten. As they neared the boy's home, he became more tense, for he was afraid to look lest there be no white flag. The minister offered to watch for him and to tell him what he saw. The train

rounded the bend and the preacher leaped to his feet, shaking his friend saying, "O, look, there is a white flag on every branch!"

God is waiting for you today to come in simple obedience, believing with all of your heart, repenting of your sins, confessing your faith and being buried with Him in baptism. Will you not come to yourself and come home today?

"GOD HATH SPOKEN"

RADIO AND TELEVISION SERMON

James W. Nichols

No. 125

June 20, 1954

There are many ways to logically prove that the Bible is inspired of God. To the man with an open mind it should not be a problem. To many, one of the most convincing is the compact way it says things.

For illustration, I should like to direct your attention today to the first two verses of the book of Hebrews. We read, "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in times past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His son, whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds."

There are no useless words, no meaningless phrases. And certainly this is a good example of God's impact in word. In two short verses is revealed God's way of dealing with man throughout all time.

We note that the writer of this book begins by stating that God "spake in times past by the prophets" at different times and in different manners. As we read through the pages of the Old Testament we notice the great number of ways in which God spoke to his people.

Going back to the very beginning, we see that in the Garden of Eden God spoke to man in a direct fashion. We are simply told, "And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, 'Where art thou?'" Genesis 3:9.

We also have the record of God speaking to Abraham, first one way, then in another. Upon one occasion angels appeared to him, still another time God spoke through a dream. But it was always the voice of God.

We find that God sent angels to Lot to warn him of the impending destruction of the city of Sodom in which that man dwelt.

The word angel simply means messenger. In the way which we ordinarily use it the word means divine messenger.

We find God addressing Jacob at Bethel in a dream and then later his son Joseph in other dreams or visions.

Before Moses led the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt, God appeared to him in the burning bush. As Moses tended the flocks of his father-in-law one day, he spotted a bush some distance away that was burning. The strange thing about it was that it was not consumed. So as Moses walked toward it, a voice came out of the bush saying, "Moses, Moses." Moses answered, "Here am I." Then the voice continued, "Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off

GOD HATH SPOKEN

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thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground. I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." God had spoken in yet another way, but it was still the voice of God.

But in the passage of scripture we are here noticing in Hebrews, we note that God in times past spoke in particular by the prophets. This was by far the most common way of God's addressing man. In the Old Testament we have no less than seventeen prophetic books, written by sixteen separate prophets. In addition there is the record of other prophets such as Elijah and Elisha who prophesied to the people, but who left us no book of prophecy.

We refer to a prophet as one who foretells future events, but the word is used in the scriptures also to signify one who acts as God's representative to man to bear his message, whether it be for the present or future.

Now I should like to have us notice the passage we are discussing states that God spoke to man in this way in "times past". By the very language in these two verses we readily conclude that God does not speak to us in this way today. In the place of the prophets, in the place of angels or dreams or burning bushes or handwriting on the wall, he has placed something else.

Notice now, God isn't only telling us here how he is speaking, but that he is also telling us how he is not speaking. There are those who in this modern day claim to be prophets of God, who claim to have some special revelation from our creator. Christ himself predicted that these would arise when he said in Mark 13:22, "For false Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall shew signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were possible even the elect, but take ye heed: behold, I have foretold you all things". Christ hereby warns us against such propagators of false doctrine.

It is a sad commentary on present conditions that many such false prophets have arisen claiming to have some special revelation or to have found some special book and that they have drawn off after them many honest and sincere people. Let us beware of those who claim to be prophets of God today.

Our text says that God spoke through the prophets of God in "times past". If I were to tell you that Woodrow Wilson was president of the United States in "times past" but now that Eisenhower is the chief executive you would have no difficulty in understanding that Woodrow Wilson has ceased to be the occupant of the White House. Likewise we are here told that God spoke in times past by the prophets but in these last days has spoken by his son.

This brings us to our next point. God is speaking in these last days by his son. "These last days refer to the last

dispensation before Christ's second coming. Peter on the day of Pentecost after the resurrection of Christ quotes the prophet Joel saying that we are now in the last days. Days refers in this sense not to 24 hour periods, but to an age. All who live this side of the cross of Christ live in these last days. The way in which God was speaking at the time of the writing of the Hebrew letter is the way in which he is speaking today.

But the one through whom God is speaking is the son of God. But how is Christ speaking? Obviously he isn't here in person. None of us has ever heard him address us by word of mouth. Are we to conclude that we have no message from his son who is the bringer of the glad tidings of redemption?

Oh, No! Even though Christ is not with us in person, we still have his message even though it has been nineteen hundred years since he walked on the earth. The first four books of the New Testament, usually called the four gospels, contain for us some of the words of Christ as he spoke them in person to his disciples. When we read those words we are hearing Christ speak. His word is supreme. In Matthew 17:5 we have recorded the words which came out of heaven at the time of the transfiguration of Christ, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased, hear ye him." This means that we should hear Christ and Christ only, for he alone has the authority. Again just before his ascension to heaven he spoke to his disciples, "all power (or authority) is given unto me in heaven and in earth." Matt. 28:18.

Notice, Christ says that He has all authority. That does not mean that He leaves any authority for you or me or any man. He finishes the statement by saying, "Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." The Lord did not even delegate to His apostles the authority to speak or to make laws as they desired. They were limited that they should teach only that which the Lord had spoken. In John the 14th chapter Christ talks to these apostles concerning what they should speak. He says, "These things have I spoken unto you, while yet abiding with you. But the Comforter, even the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said unto you." John 14:25,26. In the 16th chapter he further says, "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he shall guide you into all the truth: for he shall not speak for himself; but what things soever he shall hear, these shall he speak: and he shall declare unto you the things that are to come." John 16:13. This spirit came, so Peter relates to us, on the day of Pentecost in Acts the 2nd chapter. Christ told his chosen ones, "He that heareth you heareth me; and he that despiseth you despiseth me; and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me." Luke 10:16.

We have the teaching of those disciples recorded for us

in the rest of the New Testament and when we hear them speak, we are hearing Christ for he gave them. The books of the New Testament were divinely inspired and in them we have God's revelation for present day man.

But in order that we may see more fully the necessity for taking the words of Christ as our complete guide and only guide hear Paul in Galatians 1:6-8, "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel; which is not another: but there be some that trouble you and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." I want you to notice here that false gospel he condemns is not another, but is simply a perverted gospel, which means that it had been changed by adding to it or taking from it even though it remained the same in many particulars. Just because someone is preaching that Jesus is the son of God is no guarantee for us that he is preaching the whole gospel of Christ. It is possible for a man to preach that and yet to proclaim a perverted gospel.

This simply means, my friends, that if any man tries to persuade you that it is not necessary for you to do what the Lord has commanded or to make you believe that you should do something other than that Christ or His apostles have commanded, that such is a perverted gospel, I plead with you today to hear the words of Christ and obey Him. Believe with all of your heart, for Christ said, "He that believeth not is condemned already." Repent, for Christ said, "Except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish." Confess your faith in Him, for He also said, "Whosoever confesseth me before men, him will I also confess before my Father who is in Heaven." Put Him on in baptism, for he explicitly states, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved."

Hear the warning given in Revelation 22:18,19. "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, if any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book. And if any man shall take away from the words of the Book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the Holy city, and from the things which are written in this book." Let us ever heed that admonition and realize that there is no room for an extra revelation from God. The gospel as presented in the New Testament is sufficient for all men—for the German and the Russian, for the Englishman and the American Indian. There is no special salvation for any man and hence no special revelation needed.

Paul spoke a true word when he said, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness;

that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." (II Tim. 3:16,17). God did speak in times past in different ways, but now, God has changed his way of talking to man, and is no longer addressing us through the prophets but is speaking to us by his son, Jesus Christ. We have the words of Christ in the New Testament and the words of his apostles to whom he revealed his word. These promises are all sufficient and have no need of additions or subtraction and if adhered to until the day when we are called home, will bring us eternal life through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Will you not heed the voice of God's own Son as He pleads with you, "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest."

"THE ELDER BROTHER"

RADIO AND TELEVISION SERMON

James W. Nichols

No. 126

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While the hearts of many parents have been broken by the waywardness of sons and daughters, I suppose there is just as great a number who are grieved because of selfishness and lack of appreciation on the part of children for those who brought them into the world, reared them and cared for them.

The parable of the Lord which we usually call "The Prodigal Son" is a story of family relationships between father and sons and brothers. While this parable has been called by men "The Prodigal Son" it could just as well have been called "The Elder Brother" or "The Loving Father" for the personality of all three of these contain great lessons for us.

You remember the story that the Lord so vividly told of a younger son who took his father's substance that would have been rightfully his and went into a far away country and wasted all that he had in unrighteousness. Finally, after he had reached the degrading depths of sin, he came to himself and returned home to his father, completely humble. His father refused to hear his plea to make him only a servant, and called for a ring and robe and shoes and commanded the fatted calf killed, for his son that had been lost was found, was dead and is alive again. They began to make merry.

Christ telling of the elder son finishes the parable with these words: "Now his elder son was in the field: and as he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard music and dancing. And he called to him one of the servants, and inquired what these things might be. And he said unto him, Thy brother is come; and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe and sound. But he was angry, and would not go in: and his father came out, and entreated him. But he answered and said to his father, Lo, these many years do I serve thee, and I never transgressed a commandment of thine; and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends: but when this thy son came, who hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou killest for him the fatted calf. And he said unto him, Son, thou art ever with me, and all that is mine is thine. But it was meet to make merry and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found." (Luke 15:25-32).

I do not know, but it would seem that the attitude of this elder brother would come as quite a shock to the father. The elder son was not a wayward son in the sense that he had wasted his substance in unrighteousness. He had faithfully obeyed the commands of his father. He is what many

of us today would recognize as a staunch leader of Christianity. Yet, I feel that the father's heart was at least as heavy or heavier over the elder son as he was his prodigal son.

This elder brother did not just change over night. He didn't leave the house to go to the field that morning perfectly right and return home that evening to find his lost brother home and then lose all of his sense of right. There is every indication from the parable that he had been wrong for some time. Wrong, that is, in his thinking. But remember the Lord says, "As a man thinketh, so is he." This son's worth could not be measured by what he did or did not do, but by the thinking that motivated his actions.

There is no basis upon which we could logically reason that he just changed in a moment. That is where a lot of people are mistaken. They see some man or woman who through the years has been active and seemingly very religious, and all of a sudden they change. They then wonder how one so faithful, so strong, could fall so easily. I have heard even preachers say, "I do not know how Brother or Sister so-and-so could let such a small incident cause them to leave the Lord." The same could be said about this elder brother. How could such a small incident as the return of his brother cause him to act and talk like he did. The truth of the matter is, we do not just change instantly, but Satan by working inwardly, actually eats out our soul with sin, so that when finally some trial or temptation comes so that we speak or act the thoughts of our heart, men then see us as we actually are.

They tell me that in Africa there is a species of termites that will bore down into the ground and then bore back up into the trunk of a huge tree. These termites little by little eat out the heart of the tree, so that only a shell is left. The tree is still green and from an outward appearance appears perfectly healthy, but then some night the wind rises and the tree falls. The natives know that the wind didn't cause the tree to fall, but the termites.

The return of his brother did not cause this son to fall, but sin little by little had eaten out his soul so that he fell. Satan like a spider will little by little, so slowly that we never realize it, weave a web of sin about our soul.

Now then, what were the sins of this elder brother? First of all this elder brother showed the envy and jealousy of his heart by becoming angry and refusing to go in. He, as a child, pouted, and would have no part with the rejoicing for his brother's return.

There are many who like this elder brother have outwardly dedicated themselves to the service of the Lord, but inwardly have been eaten out with sin. These sins of the elder brother are sins that we usually call sins of the person-

ality or disposition. Some of us would call them little sins, but far too many of us think they are of no consequence. How many times when someone says or does something that offends another have we heard, "Oh, you just have to consider the source. That is just their personality." As if it could be whitewashed. But we can lose our souls over sins of disposition and of the heart just as quick as we can over murder or fornication or thievery.

Whether or not this elder brother had been drawn out to demonstrate bitterness of heart he was still wrong and if you harbor within your heart jealousy and strife and envy, whether it is ever brought out or not, you stand in condemnation before the Lord.

The apostle Paul said, "Let us walk becomingly, as in the day; not in reveling and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and jealousy." Romans 13:13. Look at this elder brother. So eaten out with jealousy and envy that he just stands and pouts. Have you ever seen grown men and women act like that? Could it be that you have seen yourself?

I have known men and women say, "Well if brother so-and-so is going to lead prayer or if sister so-and-so is going to teach the class I just won't go. I won't have anything to do with it," and they stand off like this elder brother and pout.

The story goes that one of the pioneer preachers had gone to a community back in the hills to conduct an evangelistic meeting and stayed with a certain family in the community. Every afternoon while it was still quite early the man of the family would suggest that they start for the church building, although services didn't start until lamp lighting time. They would arrive at the building and wait several hours until the others came. This went on for several days and every evening about the same time the preacher would hear a horse ride up in the brush, stop, wheel around, and take off again. Curiosity got the best of him and he asked his host what it all meant. The explanation was that he and another brother were at outs and neither of them would come to church if the other were present, so he was just coming early every time during this meeting to be sure he could attend services.

Do you think a man like that can go to heaven? When the apostle Paul says, "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousies, wraths, factions, divisions, parties, envyings, drunkenness, revellings, and such like; of which I forewarn you, even as I did forewarn you,

that they who practise such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." Galatians 5:19-21.

Friends, we can be lost because of jealousy and envy whether we ever manifest the thoughts of our heart to our fellow man. But there is more.

When the elder brother refused to come in, his father came out to him and entreated him that he should come in and the elder brother shows the selfishness, the ego, and the self-righteousness of his heart by saying, "Lo, these many years do I serve thee and I never transgressed a commandment of thine, and yet thou never gavest me a kid that I might make merry with my friends."

Can you not see this young man dashing his father's joy to the ground? A son is lost and is found, but the son that was forever with him is lost.

This young man was so proud of the works that he had performed for his father that he had let this pride consume him. Paul said, "do nothing through faction or through vain-glory, but in lowliness of mind each counting other better than himself." Philippians 2:3.

Paul further warned Timothy of coming apostasy when he said, "But know this, that in the last days grievous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, haughty, railers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, implacable, slanderers, without self-control, fierce, no lovers of good, traitors, headstrong, puffed up, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God; holding a form of godliness, but having denied the power thereof: from these also turn away." II Timothy 3:1-5.

Listen, my friends, you may have believed and repented, confessed your faith in Christ been buried with him in baptism, but if you hold within your heart pride and vain glory, you stand condemned as sure as there is a God.

This elder brother had served his father, but the service he gave was only selfish service. Not for what he could give, but for what he could receive. "Look at me, look at what I am and what I have done." This elder brother was in a worse condition than his brother who had wasted his substance with harlots.

Finally, he said, "When this thy son came, who hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou killest for him the fatted calf." Sarcasm! He is not my brother, he is your son. I am not going to have anything to do with him. The unforgiveness of his heart condemned him if nothing else did. There are some men who feel that they can go through life harboring a grudge against some other and expect to stand before God justified. But hear what Jesus said, "For if ye forgive men

their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." Matthew 6:14-15.

We have just briefly today touched in the life of this elder brother some of the so-called little sins. Little they may be in our eyes, but sin in God's sight. These sins of disposition or personality are going to carry many a preacher to hell. Hear Paul as he described those who had refused to have God in their knowledge. "God gave them up unto a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not fitting; being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness, full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, hateful to God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, unmerciful; who, knowing the ordinance of God, that they that practise such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but also consent with them that practise them." Romans 1:28-32.

Were you ever a whisperer, were you ever a backbiter, insolent, haughty, boastful? Paul says that they who do such things are worthy of death. I don't care who you are, what you are, or what you may be, God has not given you a license for such unrighteousness.

But let us look briefly at the father. This is the second time his heart has been made heavy by a son. The one that he thought he could count on now has disappointed him. But still there is love. There is concern as he says, "Son, thou art ever with me, and all that is mine is thine. But it was meet to make merry and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found." Luke 15:31-32.

Though we as children of God transgress the father's commands, He has made it possible for us to return his love and mercy. John says, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. My little children, these things write I unto you that ye may not sin. And if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." I John 1:9, I John 2:1.

My friends, we are not primarily concerned with what will happen today or tomorrow, but we are concerned with what will happen in eternity. I am concerned for you, as you will one day stand before the judgment seat of God. Peter says, "For the time is come for judgment to begin at the house of God: and if it begin first at us, what shall be the end of them that obey not the gospel of God; And if the righteous is scarcely saved, where shall the ungodly and sinner appear?" I Peter 4:17,18. That simply means that if

you are not in the household of God you stand without hope. But though you are even in the household of God, you shall stand before the judgment seat of God. Those of you who are in the audience today will you not in simple obedience become a child of God that you might be in the house of God, believing with all of your heart that Jesus is the Christ, repenting of your sins, confessing your faith in Him and being buried with Him in Baptism. Paul tells us how to become children of God in Galatians the 3rd chapter, "For ye are all sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ." Galatians 3:26,27. My wandering brother, will you not come back today unto the Lord? He stands pleading and begging that you should come home. We pray for you that you will.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

May, 1954

RECEIPTS:

Paid on Pledges	\$28,421.63
Contributions	6,844.27
Transcriptions	410.00
Miscellaneous	37.10
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Total receipts for May, '54

\$35,713.00

EXPENDITURES:

Broadcasting Expense:

Tape Recording	852.72	
Radio Time	27,691.97	
Television	18,877.46	47,422.15
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Wages	3,607.50
Travel	290.86

Office Expense:

Mail Room	526.78	
Soc. Sec. Exp.	50.15	
Office Supplies	135.64	
Rent	150.00	
Utilities	21.23	
Tel. & Tel.	208.38	
Printing	462.08	
Miscellaneous	50.00	1,604.26
	<hr/>	

Total Expenditures for May, '54

52,924.77

Expenditures exceed receipts by

\$17,211.77

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